



# CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

## Special Concurrent City Council and Transportation Commission Worksession July 9, 2014

### CALL TO ORDER

The concurrent worksession was called to order by Mayor Goettel at 7:05 p.m. in the Bartholomew Room.

*Council Members Present:* Debbie Goettel, Mayor; Pat Elliott (via WebEx); Sue Sandahl; Edwina Garcia; and Tom Fitzhenry.

*Transportation Commission Members Present:* Martin Kirsch, Chair; Gary Ness, Ken Severson; Tim Carter; David Taylor; Gerry Charnitz; and Ted Weidenbach.

*Transportation Commission Members Absent:* Ghislaine Ball and Terry Ahlstrom.

*Staff Present:* Steven L. Devich, City Manager; Mike Eastling, Public Works Director; Kristin Asher, Assistant Public Works Director; Jeff Pearson, Transportation Engineer; Liz Finnegan; Civil Engineer; and Cheryl Krumholz, Executive Coordinator.

*Others Present:* Jim Grube, Hennepin County Engineer; Maury Hooper, Hennepin County Project Engineer; Bill Klingbeil, Kimley Horn & Associates; Jack Broz, Avenue Design Partners; Craig Churchward; Avenue Design Partners; and Chris Olson, Richfield Bike Advocates.

<b>Item #1</b>	<b>DISCUSSION REGARDING 66<sup>TH</sup> STREET RECONSTRUCTION (COUNCIL MEMO NO. 64)</b>
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Mayor Goettel stated that there may not be time this evening for the public to comment on this project but another opportunity would be provided at a future worksession. Tonight's worksession is information gathering for the City Council and Transportation Commission.

Public Works Director Eastling provided the background leading up to this evening's discussion, emphasizing the proposed reconstruction project is a 50-100 year decision and nearly \$40 million investment in 66<sup>th</sup> Street. He also discussed the Crosstown 'Pinch Point' and potential additional capacity.

Public Works Director Eastling stated that much of the discussion will involve the section of the corridor between I-35W and Xerxes Avenue.

Jim Grube, Hennepin County Engineer, discussed the Hennepin County Board's perspective on the corridor reconstruction related to their responsibility to the public, including transportation choices, support of active living, complete streets, and attaining a balance for the region, the City and

residents along 66<sup>th</sup> Street. He stated the values between competing interests and reaching a compromise should be considered on this 50 year decision.

Jack Broz, Advanced Design Partners, discussed the design process to date, including the vision, context, problem, goals/measures, alternative analysis and right-sizing design.

Mayor Goettel stated that, along with Council Member Elliott, she has concerns with the taking of 17-20 homes along 66<sup>th</sup> Street, overbuilding, creating an auxiliary freeway, business viability and parking issues. She expressed additional concern regarding the residential impacts and suggested broader conversations are needed. She supported complete streets but that may not be viable in all areas of the City.

Council Member Fitzhenry stated that different parts of the City have impacts and reconstruction needs to fit with the neighborhoods.

Mr. Broz revised the preferred concepts for the 66<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor east and west of Nicollet Avenue resulting in the lowest impacts to the adjacent properties:

Concept #2 On-street bicycle lanes and sidewalk and multi-use trail

Concept #4B One-way cycle tracks with two sidewalks, boulevard between vehicle and cycle track.

Council Member Fitzhenry suggested 66<sup>th</sup> Street be included in the MnDOT GPS traffic management center.

Jeff Pearson, Transportation Engineer, stated that MnDOT only includes regional systems.

Mr. Grube explained 66<sup>th</sup> Street is referred to as a Crosstown reliever.

Council Member Elliott responded that 66<sup>th</sup> Street may be called a reliever but it is used as an alternative to Crosstown.

Maury Hooper, Hennepin County Project Engineer, discussed the traffic analysis and design, including safety review, traffic volume and operations review and crash analysis. He stated that if the reconstruction continues with the low impact design, there will be no change in the crash summary data, but prohibiting turns may decrease crashes.

Bill Klingbeil, Kimley Horn & Associates, will provide more detailed crash data, including peak periods and if a neighborhood resident was involved.

Transportation Engineer Pearson discussed a three-lane conversion along the corridor which would result in some traffic constraints.

Public Works Director Eastling added that restricting turns could put more traffic in the neighborhoods.

Council Member Elliott stated he was distressed regarding the lack of communication and inadequate community involvement. He added that he did not have a lot of faith in design and concept models being used as predictors. There appears to be no connectivity in the models and that the options are short-sighted and not reducing the volume of traffic and utilizing 66<sup>th</sup> Street as it was intended.

Transportation Commission Member Weidenbach questioned how a three-lane conversion would be safer for pedestrians.

Transportation Engineer Pearson explained the low impact three-lane concept achieves pedestrian safety along 66<sup>th</sup> Street due to islands for crossing. He added the City has not contacted the owners of the seven properties to be acquired along 66<sup>th</sup> Street between I-35W and Penn Avenue but three have contacted the City to state they are willing sellers.

Mr. Hooper explained the existing right of way west of Penn Avenue and that a variance would be needed to reduce the existing 84 feet to 82 feet which does provide a boulevard.

Mr. Grube explained the variance request process which has reasonably good success. He stated that his overall position along the whole corridor is that he would not support reducing the

gutter lane to 18 inches and having no boulevard. The boulevard is needed for snow storage and to not provide that is a failure to pedestrians.

Public Works Director Easting stated that to provide the boulevard on 66<sup>th</sup> Street between I-35W and Penn Avenue, the taking of seven homes is required.

Council Member Sandahl stated she did not support reconstructing of the 66<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor without a boulevard between the street and pedestrians.

Transportation Commission Member Severson questioned if re-orienting to the north side of 66<sup>th</sup> Street was still being considered.

Transportation Engineer Pearson responded that would result in considerably more property acquisition upfront because the grades are different. That option is still under review but there was not time to prepare for that discussion this evening.

Council Member Elliott agreed the north and south sides of 66<sup>th</sup> Street should be explored so the property loss is limited as much as possible.

Mr. Severson suggested the removal of driveways onto 66<sup>th</sup> Street be considered.

Mayor Goettel stated the traffic should be calmed and the street be given back to the neighbors. She added the business community should be informed of the impact realities.

Mr. Grube explained that during construction, access to the businesses is kept open.

Mr. Pearson stated there were two meetings with the businesses along the corridor a few months ago. He added that property owners should continue to make improvements because that will be reflected in their market value.

Mr. Weidenbach stated that the biggest comments he has heard is that there should not be a three-lane conversion along the corridor between Nicollet and Xerxes Avenues but that Mayor Goettel and Council Member Elliott support that option.

Council Member Elliott stated all aspects should be explored with the lowest impact on properties but not to sacrifice safety.

Council Member Sandahl said best alternatives given all the factors deemed important should be considered for the long-term interest of the community.

Transportation Commission Member Carter stated that from the business standpoint, 66<sup>th</sup> Street is economically a regional powerhouse and traffic should not be restricted but safety cannot be sacrificed.

Mr. Grube asked the City Council and Transportation Commission if there was reasonable satisfaction with what has been proposed and presented for the 66<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor east of I-35W.

The consensus was to proceed with the reconstruction process of the 66<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor east of I-35W and continue communication with the residents along the 66<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor to the west of I-35W.

The concurrent worksession was adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:17 p.m.

Date Approved: July 22, 2014.

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Debbie Goettel  
Mayor

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Cheryl Krumholz  
Executive Coordinator

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Steven L. Devich  
City Manager